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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9257
INFO RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE
RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 2170
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 5640
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 9240
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 6819
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 4621
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2615
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 RANGOON 000453

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STATE FOR EAP, IO

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/20/2019

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SUBJECT: BURMA: OPPOSITION MEMBERS BRIEFLY DETAINED ON
MARTYR'S DAY; AUNG SAN SUU KYI MEETS LAWYERS

Classified By: P/E Chief Jennifer Harhigh for Reasons 1.4 (b) & (d)

Forty NLD Marchers Questioned, Released Amid Tight Security

¶1. (C) National League for Democracy (NLD) spokesman Nyan Win confirmed that Burmese police detained approximately forty NLD members for questioning July 19 as they marched from NLD Headquarters to nearby Martyr's Mausoleum in Rangoon to commemorate Martyr's Day, which marks the July 19, 1947 assassination of independence hero General Aung San (father of NLD leader Aung San Suu Kyi). All forty detainees, many of whom sported t-shirts with the image of Aung San, were released after approximately 90 minutes; none remain in custody.

¶2. (C) Police maintained tight security and blocked roads around the Mausoleum July 19; no other security incidents were reported. Both the English and Burmese July 20 versions of the regime-run New Light of Myanmar offered scant coverage of the holiday, compared with past years. (Note/comment: Until 2008, Martyr's Day was a national holiday, with a major commemoration in Rangoon for which diplomats received invitations. Starting last year, the regime downgraded the day to a local holiday with the Mayor of Rangoon as chief guest and without diplomatic representation. Many presume the downgrade is a regime attempt to reduce the aura of Aung San, and thus of his daughter ASSK.)

NLD Commemorates Memory of Aung San; Calls for Prisoner Release

¶3. (SBU) Meanwhile, the NLD marked Martyr's Day with a ceremony at NLD HQ. Charge and Embassy officers, along with other Western diplomats, attended the event, during which a packed house of supporters enthusiastically applauded calls for the immediate release of ASSK, NLD Vice-Chair U Tin Oo, 88 Generation leaders Min Ko Naing and Ko Ko Gyi, and other political prisoners. NLD leaders recounted quotes by Aung San extolling the virtues of participatory democracy and emphasizing the need for parliamentary control of the military.

¶4. (SBU) Interestingly, one statement called for immediate

dialogue between the SPDC and the NLD, with inclusion of ethnic minority parties to follow, rather than a concurrent tripartite dialogue, as party leaders have consistently insisted on in past statements. As usual, NLD-allied ethnic party leaders attended the ceremony as guests of honor. Two notable no-shows at the NLD ceremony were party chair U Aung Shwe, who is in deteriorating health at age 92, and NLD Central Committee member U Win Tin, who is reportedly recovering successfully from cataract surgery.

Aung San Suu Kyi Meets Lawyers, Prepares Final Arguments

15. (C) ASSK lawyer Nyan Win confirmed he and his co-counsel met with ASSK for two hours on July 17 to consult on final arguments in the ASSK/Yettaw trial which is to resume at 2 p.m. on Friday, July 24. According to Nyan Win, ASSK assisted with the preparation of a twenty-page statement which lead attorney Kyi Win (aka Neville) will read in court.

Neville told us July 14 that he drafted the initial statement and then presented it to ASSK to edit. Neville added, "I am confident we have the laws on our side, but I am not sure we have the judges on our side." Nyan Win said that during the meeting July 17, ASSK stressed that the security services, not she, should be held accountable for Yettaw's intrusion onto her property.

16. (C) Nyan Win is doubtful closing arguments will conclude on July 24; he predicts the court session will be extended to the week of July 27. He added that ASSK is in good health

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and that attorneys are scheduled to meet with her again today, July 20. He added that ASSK marked Martyr's Day by donating oats and cake to prisoners in the Insein Prison Hospital.

DINGER